

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01

TRSE-00 AEC-11 CIAE-00 COME-00 IO-12 RSR-01 /072 W

----- 052876

R 121449 Z APR 73

FM USMISSION OECD PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9328

C O N F I D E N T I A L OECD PARIS 10228

E. O.: 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: ESTC, COCOM, IT, BE

SUBJ: COCOM CHAIRMANSHIP

EXCON

REF: OECD PARIS 10085 AND PREVIOUS

SUMMARY: THIS MESSAGE GIVES USDEL COMMENTS AND TACTICAL SUGGESTIONS REGARDING CHOICE WE NOW FACE BETWEEN ITALIAN AND BELGIAN CANDIDATES FOR COCOM CHAIRMANSHIP. IT HAS CONSCIOUSLY NOT BEEN SENT TO BRUSSELS OR ROME SO AS NOT TO GENERATE SUPPORT FOR HOST- COUNTRY CANDIDATES, BUT USDEL WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION SHOULD DEPT WISH TO REPEAT NUMBERED PARAS HEREOF. WE FEEL WE HAVE INSUFFICIENT INFORMATION ON CANDIDATES TO RECOMMEND ONE OVER THE OTHER. END SUMMARY.

1. WHILE IT WOULD ADMITTEDLY HAVE BEEN MUCH EASIER FOR ALL CONCERNED IF BELIGANS HAD NOT PROPOSED A CANDIDATE, AND WHILE, AS MENTIONED REFTTEL, SEVERAL OTHER DELS SEEM UNENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT BELGIAN CANDIDACY, WE FEEL THE US SHOULD NOT TOO QUICKLY PRE- JUDGE THE QUESTION OF THE COCOM CHAIRMANSHIP. THE POSITION IS A PECULIAR ONE. THE CURRICULA VITAE OF THE TWO CANDIDATES DO NOT NECESSARILY REVEAL THEIR QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE JOB. SEPTTEL REPORTS ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM BEL DEL ON DE LIEDEKERKE.

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2. WHAT IS NEEDED IS A MAN ABLE TO GRASP AND TO SUM UP WITH PRECISION AND CONCISION THE DIFFERING VIEWS OF SEVERAL DELEGATES ON WHAT MAY BE A VERY COMPLEX ISSUE, BESET WITH TECHNICALITIES THAT PERHAPS NONE OF THEM FULLY UNDERSTANDS. FOR THIS, A MAN WITH LEGAL TRAINING WOULD BE IDEAL. BUT ALSO WE NEED A REFEREE, ONE WITH BOTH THE INTELLECTUAL AND THE MORAL FORCE REQUIRED TO OVERRULE STRONG OR OBSTREPEROUS DELEGATES OR TO BRING THEM INTO LINE. WE LIKEWISE NEED A SKILLED DIPLOMAT WITH THE ABILITY TO MANEUVER, CAJOLE, WHEELDE OR OTHERWISE PERSUADE, WITHIN THE NARROW LIMITS THAT THE COCOM SITUATION ALLOWS. ABOVE ALL, WHAT IS NEEDED IS A PERSONALITY OF SOME FORCE, BUT WITHOUT ROUGHNESS.

3. INDELICATO OFFERS THE LEGAL BACKGROUND THAT MIGHT EN-ABLE HIM TO SUMMARIZE CONFLICTING VIEWS. BUT DOES HE HAVE THE FORCE AND SUBTLETY NEEDED TO BE A REFEREE? CAN HE HANDLE VERNOUX? CAN HE SAY TO VERNOUX, AS TEDESCHI HAS SAID TO HIM, "MR. VERNOUX, YOU ARE WRONG"? HERE, ONE IS INCLINED TOWARD DE LIEKEKERKE WHO, WITH HIS AGE AND SENIORITY, MIGHT WELL BE PREPARED TO DEAL BRUSQUELY WITH THE FRENCH DEL WHEN THE SITUATION REQUIRED IT. HIS MILITARY BACKGROUND ALSO ARGUES IN HIS FAVOR FROM THIS POINT OF VIEW. ON THE OTHER HAND, MIGHT HE NOT BE EQUALLY BRUSQUE IN DEALING WITH THE US? THESE DAYS, IT IS A MARK OF CHARACTER AND INDEPENDENCE EVEN IN EUROPE TO BE FIRM AND FORCEFUL IN ONE' S DEALING WITH THE US.

4. ANOTHER IMPORTANT FACTOR WHICH WASHINGTON WILL HAVE TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT IS THE EXTENT TO WHICH EITHER CANDIDATE WILL BE OBJECTIVE, IMPARTIAL AND DISINTERESTED IN DEALING WITH THE DEL FROM HIS OWN COUNTRY. TEDESCHI, DURING OUR TENURE, HAS CERTAINLY BENT OVER BACKWARD TO SHOW NO FAVORITISM TO THE ITALIAN DEL. IT COULD BE ARGUED THAT INDELICATO, YOUNGER AND WITH MORE OF HIS CAREER AHEAD OF HIM, MIGHT BE MORE SENSITIVE TO A NEED TO SUPPORT ITALIAN INTERESTS. WE ALSO HAVE NO BASIS FOR JUDGING DE LIEDEKERKE' S LIKELY PERFORMANCE IN THIS SENSITIVE AREA, BUT AGAIN IT COULD BE ARGUED THAT EVEN THOUGH NEAR THE TOP OF THE LADDER, HE WOULD STILL BE INTERESTED IN A GOOD POST FOR HIS NEXT ASSIGNMENT AND HENCE WOULD WANT TO PROTECT HIS FLANKS FROM CRITICISM IN BRUSSELS.

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5. FROM THE USDEL' S VANTAGE POINT THE RECORD GIVES US
NO SURE GUIDE IN MAKING A CHOICE. IT ONLY SUGGESTS THAT:

A. THE US IS UNDER NO OBLIGATION TO ITALY TO SUPPORT
INDELICATO. WE SHOULD NEVERTHELESS BE UNDERSTANDING IF
ITALY PLEADED A CONTINUING REQUIREMENT FOR " IN KIND" -
I. E., PERSONNEL - CONTRIBUTION AS ITS SHARE OF THE COCOM
BUDGET;

B. JUDGING FROM THEIR CAREERS, NEITHER CANDIDATE APPEARS
TO OFFER QUALIFICATIONS DECISIVELY BETTER THAN THOSE OF
THE OTHER FOR THIS PARTICULAR, AND PECULIAR, JOB;

C. US INTERESTS WOULD NOT BE DAMAGED BY HAVING A
FORCEFUL CHAIRMAN;

D. BELGIAN IRRITATION OVER OUR TARDY POSITION ON (72)
1917 WOULD BE ASSUAGED BY OUR SUPPORT OF DE LIEDEKERKE,
OR AT LEAST BY OUR NEUTRALITY.

6. WE ARE UNAWARE OF ANY CIRCUMSTANCES IN BILATERAL
US- ITALIAN OR US- BELGIAN RELATIONS WHICH MIGHT MILITATE
FOR CHOICE ONE WAY OR THE OTHER, BUT ASSUME DEPT WILL ADD
THESE WEIGHTS ON EITHER SIDE OF BALANCE. IN THE EXPERIENCE
OF THE PRESENT USDEL, IT DOES APPEAR, HOWEVER, THAT IN
THE COCOM CONTEXT THE ITALIANS HAVE CAUSED LESS TROUBLE THAN
THE BELGIANS. OVER AND ABOVE THE (72) 1917 INCIDENT IN WHICH
THE BELGIANS ISSUED A LICENSE (ALBEIT LATER WITHDRAWN) IN THE
ABSENCE OF UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT, THE BELGIANS HAVE NEVER
ADEQUATELY EXPLAINED THEIR SERIES OF REPETITIVE DE MINIMIS
SHIPMENTS EXACTLY AT THE CUT- OFF, AND THEIR RECENT PROPOSAL
TO RAISE THE DE MINIMIS LEVELS ALSO SEEMS LESS THAN
" STATESMANLIKE."

7. IN ESSENCE, THEREFORE, WE LEAVE TO WASHINGTON THE HARD
CHOICE BETWEEN IDELICATO AND DE LIEDEKERKE. THERE SEEM
TO BE THREE BASIC POSSIBILITIES:

A. STRONG PREFERENCE FOR ONE;

B. MODEST PREFERENCE;
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C. NO REAL PREFERENCE.

8. IT IS CLEAR THAT OTHER MEMBERS WILL LOOK TO US LEADERSHIP
IN THE FINAL VOTE (IF IT COMES TO THAT). IN ORDER TO HEAD

OFF AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE THE DIVISIVE IMPACT THE MULTIPLE CANDIDACY WILL HAVE, THE SOONER THE US CAN MAKE ITS FEELING KNOWN THE BETTER, AND THE STRONGER THESE FEELINGS ARE, THE GREATER WILL BE THEIR INFLUENCE.

9. IF WASHINGTON DECIDES THAT ONE CANDIDATE IS SUBSTANTIALLY PREFERABLE TO THE OTHER, THE BEST TACTIC WOULD PROBABLY BE TO SEEK THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE CONTENDER. IN THE FIRST INSTANCE BILATERALLY BETWEEN OUR EMBASSY AND HOST GOVERNMENT CONCERNED. IF THAT DID NOT WORK, THEN WE COULD REASSESS TACTIC THEREAFTER. IF OUR PREFERENCE IS LESS STRONG, THEN IT WOULD SEEM ADEQUATE MERELY TO INFORM CHAIRMAN AND BEL DEL PROMPTLY, AND OTHER DELS ONLY IF ASKED. LEAST SATISFACTORY SITUATION WOULD BE FOR US TO TAKE NO POSITION, AND MERELY " JOIN THE MAJORITY." IN THAT CASE THERE MIGHT WELL BE NO MAJORITY TO JOIN.
BROWN

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts:
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 APR 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: hilburpw
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973OECDP10228
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: OECD PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730441/aaaaijgm.tel
Line Count: 190
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: hilburpw
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17-Aug-2001 by shawdg>; APPROVED <09-Nov-2001 by hilburpw>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 980105
Subject: COCOM CHAIRMANSHIP
TAGS: ESTC, BE, IT, COCOM
To: EB
SECSTATE WASHDC
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005